

# What explains the ethnic gap in attainment at medical school?

Katherine Woolf, Chris McManus,  
Henry W W Potts & Jane Dacre

Academic Centre for Medical Education (ACME) &  
Centre for Health Informatics and Multi-profession Education (CHIME)



## 4.3 Degree attainment

A number of factors are known to affect degree outcome, including student age, gender, prior attainment, ethnicity, social class and subject of study, often in combination, as previous research has shown.<sup>10</sup> In particular:

- = men are likely to get a lower degree classification than women, except when it comes to attaining a first, where there is little difference
- = the likelihood of getting a first increases with age
- = white students attain higher degree classes than BME students.

The attainment gap between white and some BME groups is wide: in the DfES research it was shown that 66% of white students got a first or upper second class degree in 2003/04 compared with 45% of black Caribbean and 43% of black African students. The DfES research showed that after controlling for the majority of factors that would be expected to have an impact (using HESA data), being from a minority ethnic group (with exception of mixed, other black and other groups) was still a statistically significant factor explaining attainment, although the gap is reduced. The ECU/Higher Education Academy project did not find any information to contradict the DfES findings, and showed that the cause of degree attainment

# UCL Medical School

The background image shows a wide, paved courtyard at UCL Medical School. The courtyard is flanked by green lawns and mature trees. In the distance, a large, classical-style building with a prominent dome and spire is visible under a clear blue sky. Several people are walking along the path in the courtyard.

- Central London
- 350 students per year
- 6 year course including iBSc

Year 3 first fully clinical year



# UCL Medical Students



- High achieving (60% top school leaving grades)
- ~90% straight from school/gap year
- ~50% from fee-paying schools
- ~85% English first language

# Ethnic mix at UCL Medical School



~ 50% white; ~ 50% ethnic minority

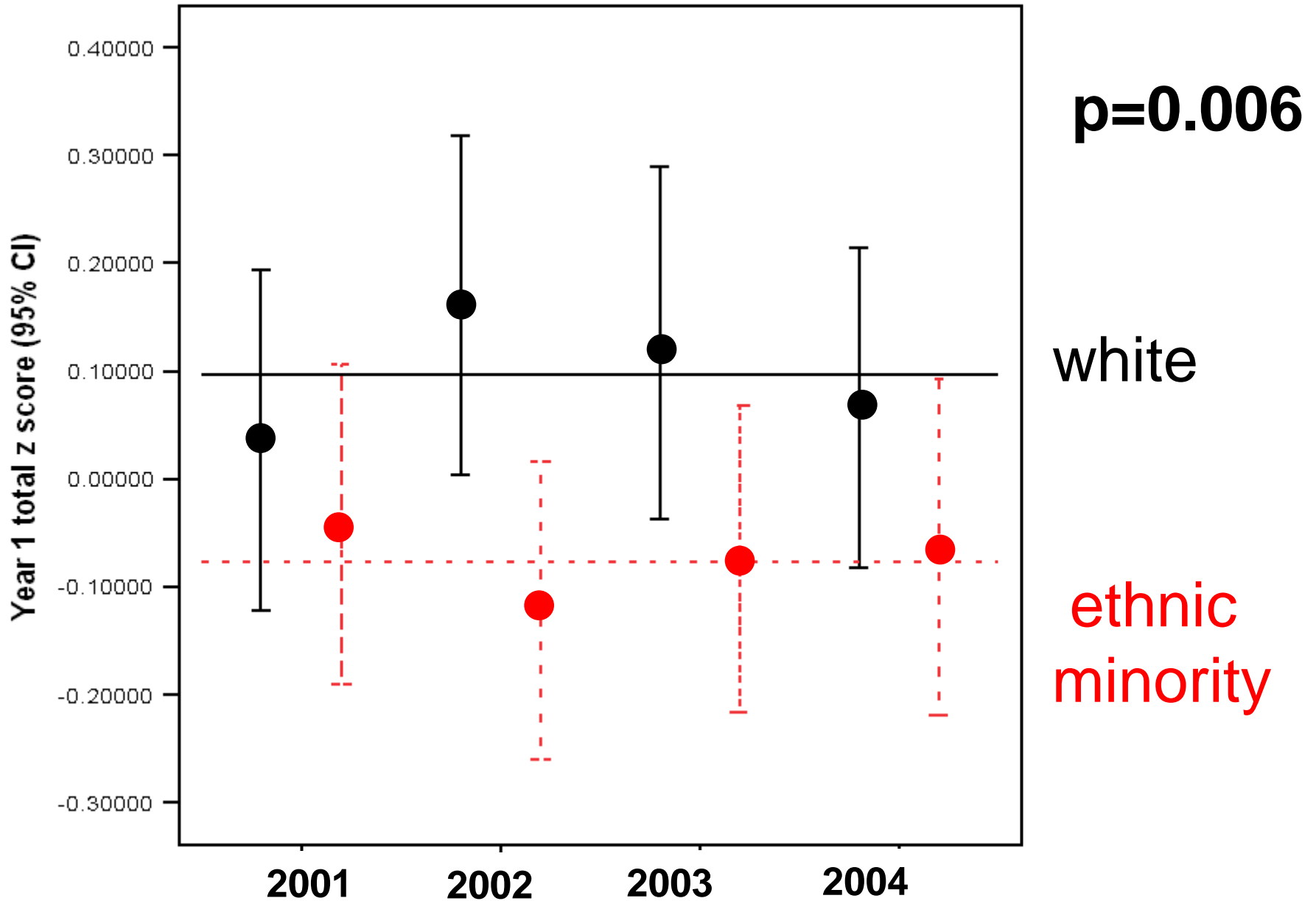
- 33% White British

- 17% Asian/British Asian - Indian

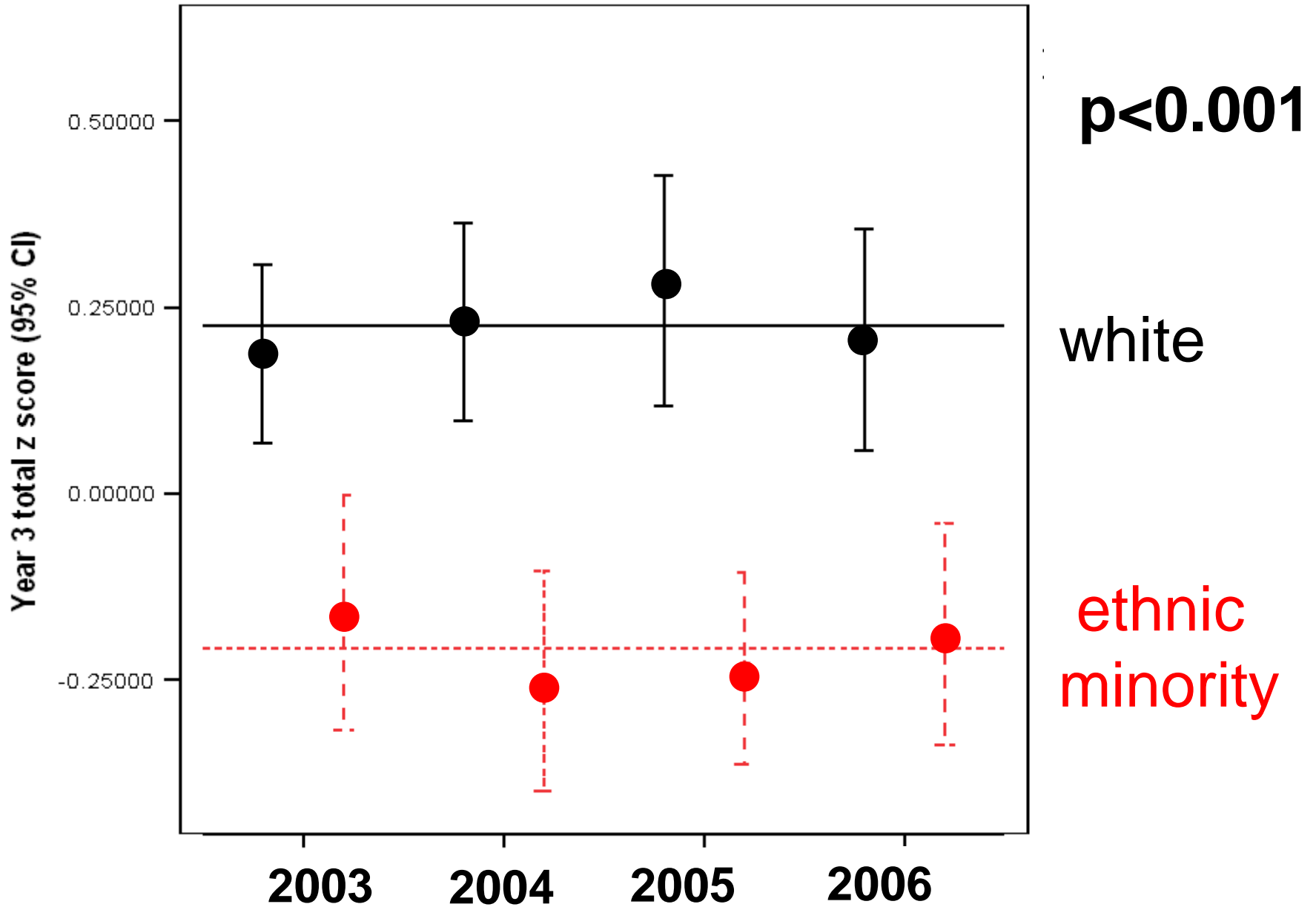
- 8% Asian/British Asian - Other

- 0.5% Black/Black British - Caribbean

# The ethnic gap in Year 1



# The ethnic gap in Year 3



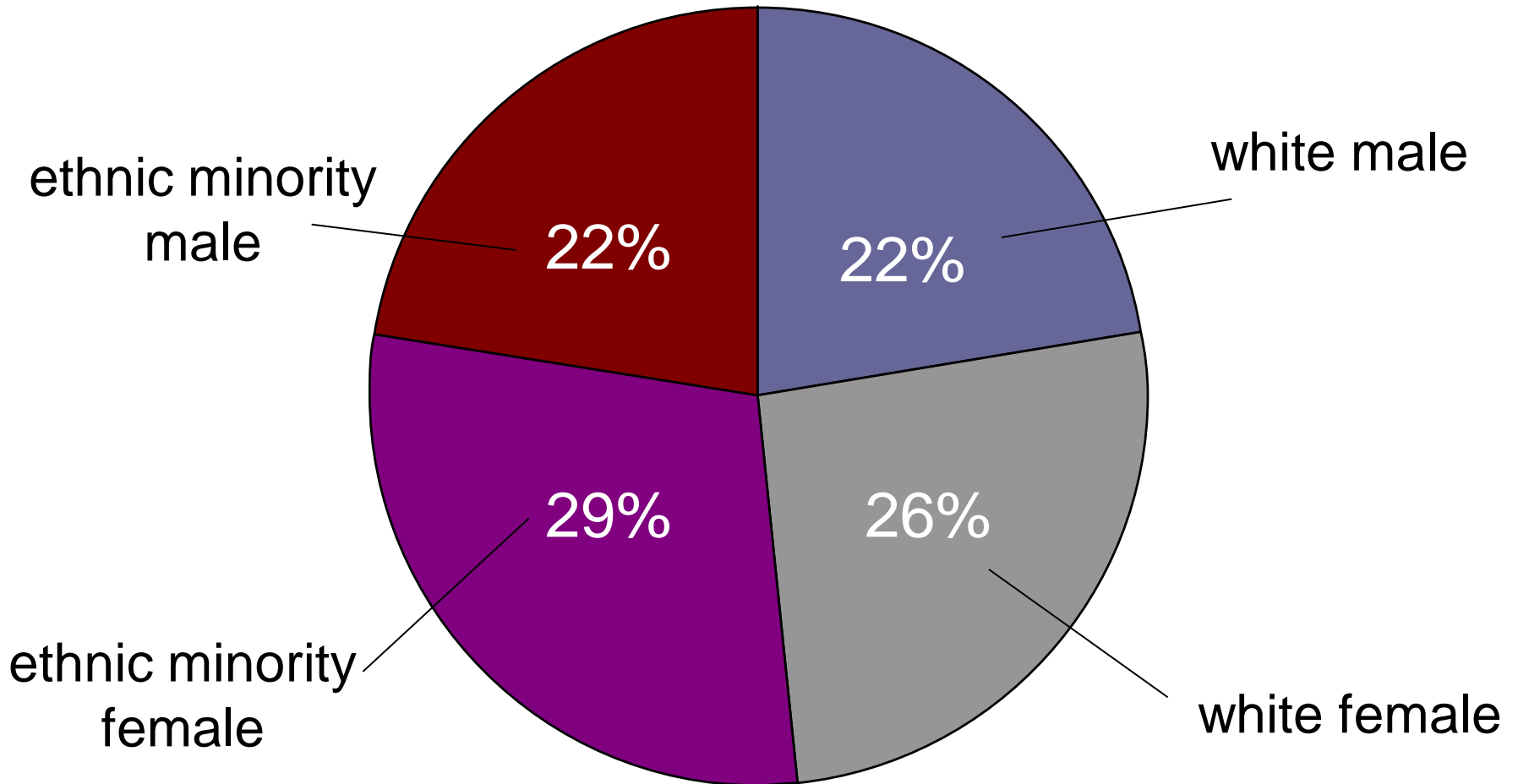
# Why?

- Language?
- Schooling / school leaving grades?
- Socioeconomic group?
- Living at home?
- Motivation for studying medicine?
- Learning habits/styles?
- Subgroups?
- Knowing 'the system' or 'fitting in'?



# Questionnaire study

- n=1441 UCL students in Year 1 & Year 3



Were there ethnic differences  
on questionnaire variables?

A white speech bubble with a black outline is centered on a black background. The bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom-left corner. Inside the bubble, the word "Language?" is written in a black, sans-serif font.

Language?

# Language?



More ethnic minority students:

- Spoke English as a second language
- Had parents who speak English as a second language

Both significantly related to lower Year 3 scores ( $p < 0.05$ )



Socioeconomic group/  
**parents' occupation?**

# Socioeconomic group/ **parents' occupation?**



no difference in socioeconomic group

# Socioeconomic group/ parents' occupation?



no difference in socioeconomic group



Ethnic minority students  
**MORE** likely to have  
doctor parents

# Fee paying vs state school?





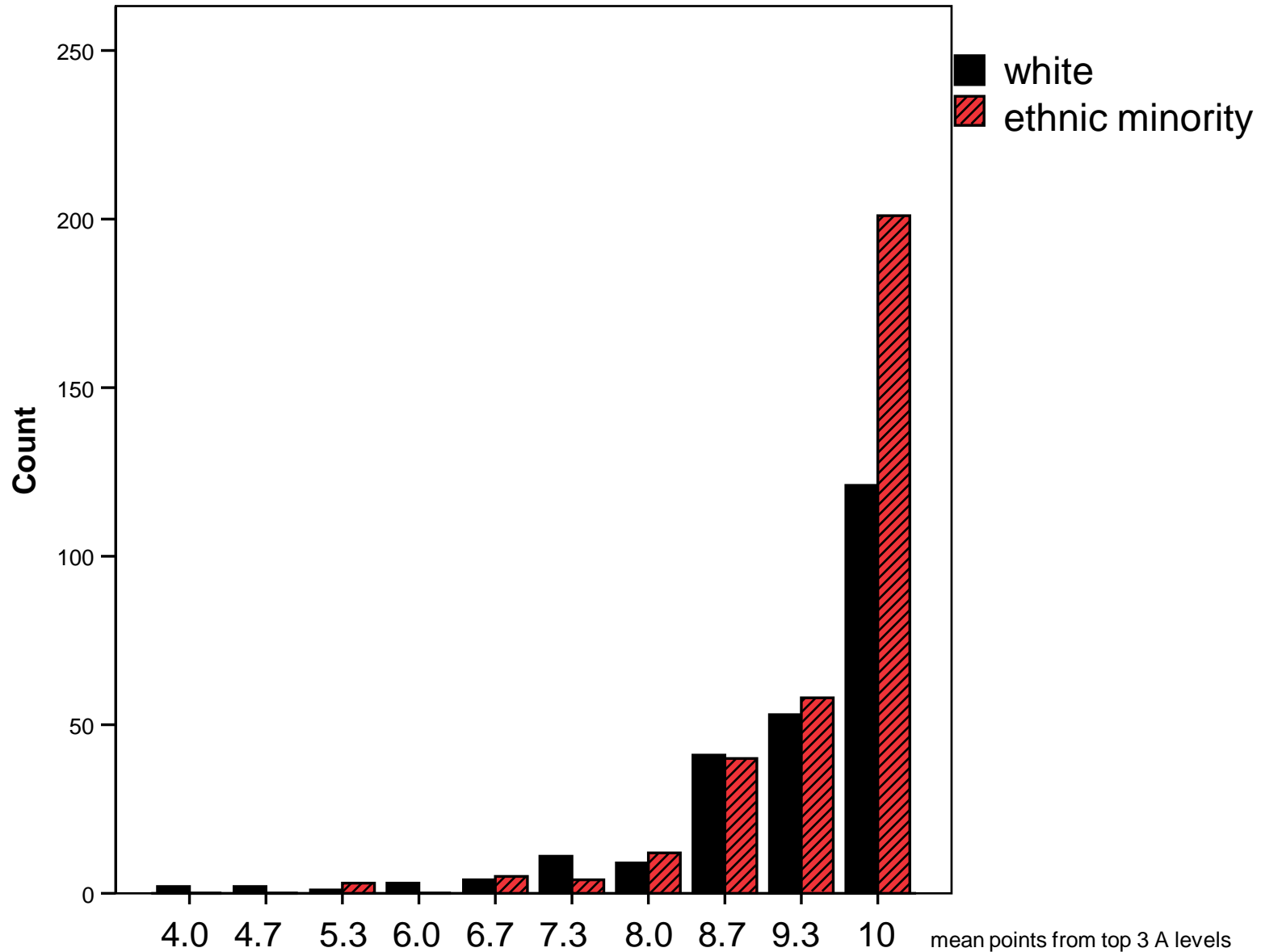
# Fee paying vs state school?



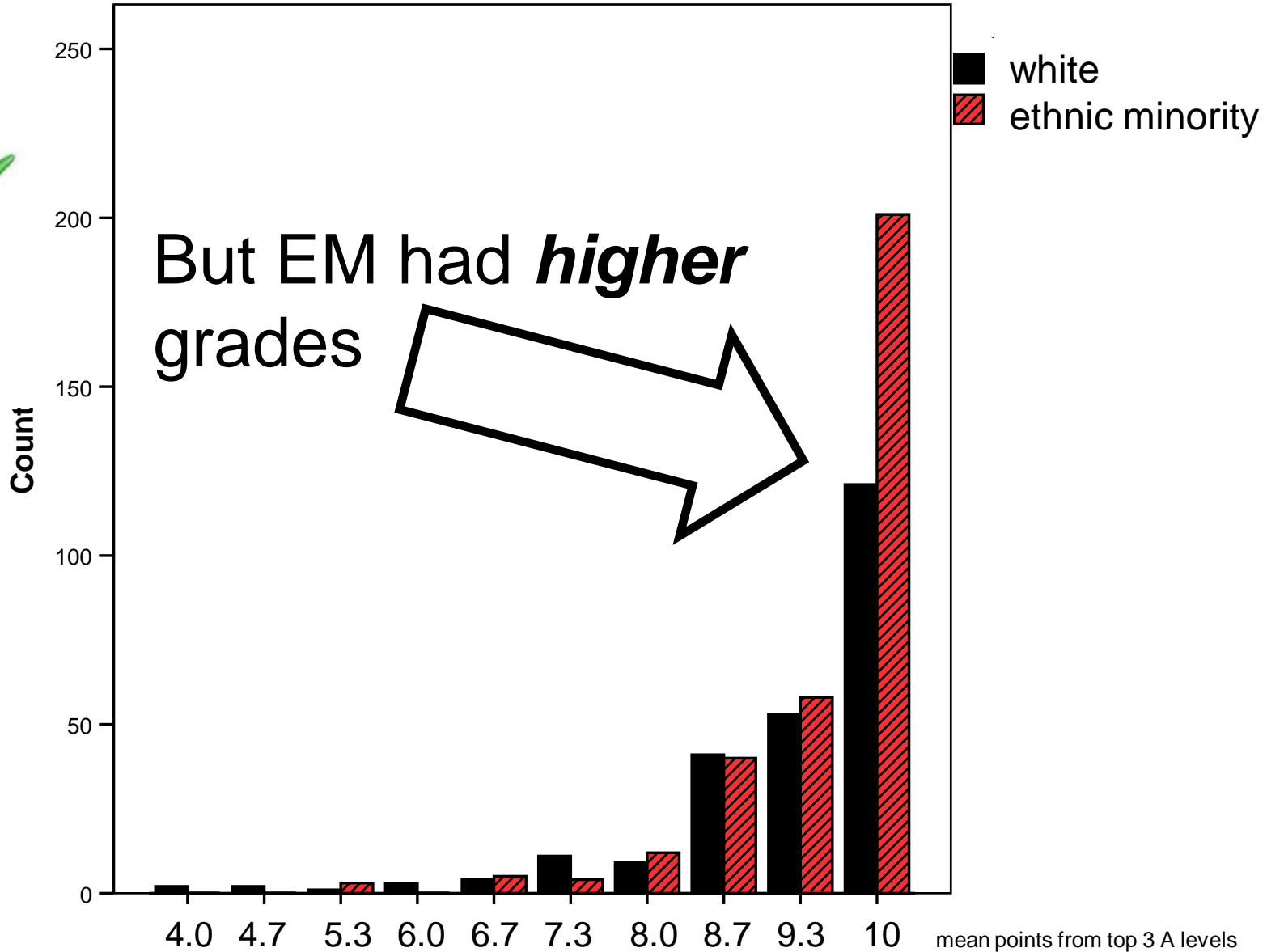
white and ethnic minorities  
equally likely to attend  
fee-paying school



# School leaving grades?



# School leaving grades?



Graduates already?







# Graduates already?

- More whites are graduates
- Graduates scored higher in Year 3 ( $r=0.09$ ;  $p<0.05$ )

# Personality?



# Personality?



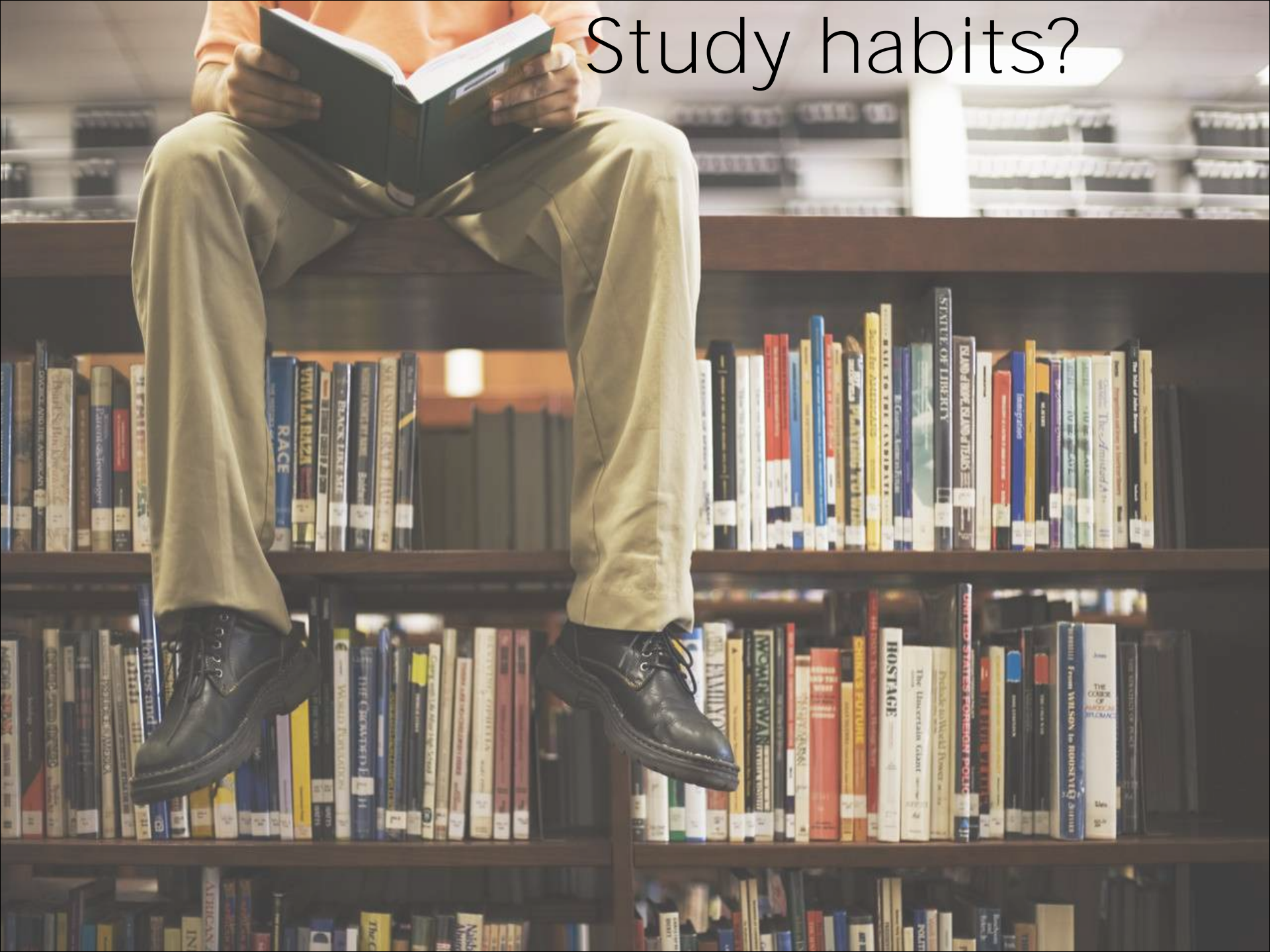
In Year 3, ethnic minorities  
lower on Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness students achieved  
higher scores ( $r=0.25$ ;  $p<0.05$ )





# Study habits?





# Study habits?



Ethnic minorities:

- higher on surface learning
- lower on deep learning

Deep learning related to higher scores  
( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ )

# Motivation?

1. Helping people
2. Financial security and status
3. Responsibility and leadership
4. Interesting career



# Motivation?

1. Helping people
2. Financial security and status
3. Responsibility and leadership
4. Interesting career



ethnic minorities more motivated by “interesting career” factor in Year 1 only ( $t=-2.7$ ;  $p=0.006$ )

# Live at home?





# Live at home?



ethnic minorities more likely to live at home

students living at home scored lower in exams  
( $r=-0.10$ ;  $p<0.05$ )



Did these differences  
*explain* the ethnic gap?



# Multiple regression - Year 1

	<i>Beta</i>	<i>P value</i>
Surface	.027	.530
Deep	.040	.409
Strategic	-.010	.845
Graduate	.036	.482
Helping others	.019	.653
Financial rewards	.007	.855
Responsibility	-.072	.079
Interesting	-.001	.976
English first language	-.056	.197
Neuroticism	.027	.509
<b>Extraversion</b>	<b>-.087</b>	<b>.036</b>
Openness	.060	.148
Agreeableness	.026	.539
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	<b>.128</b>	<b>.009</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>-.136</b>	<b>.004</b>
Sex	-.074	.067
Age	.016	.757
Parents' first language	-.011	.824
At least one doctor parent	.012	.746

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# Multiple regression – Year 3 total

	<i>Beta</i>	<i>p value</i>
Live at home	-.067	.107
Surface	-.040	.361
Deep	.082	.097
Strategic	.101	.068
iBSc	.080	.073
<b>Graduate</b>	<b>.160</b>	<b>.011</b>
Financial rewards	.058	.173
Helping others	-.057	.198
Interesting	.021	.601
Responsibility	.042	.293
English first language	.081	.065
Neuroticism	.033	.407
Extraversion	-.037	.377
Openness	-.040	.355
Agreeableness	-.005	.904
Conscientiousness	.085	.090
Age	.074	.201
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>-.176</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Sex</b>	<b>.106</b>	<b>.009</b>
Parents first language	-.039	.459

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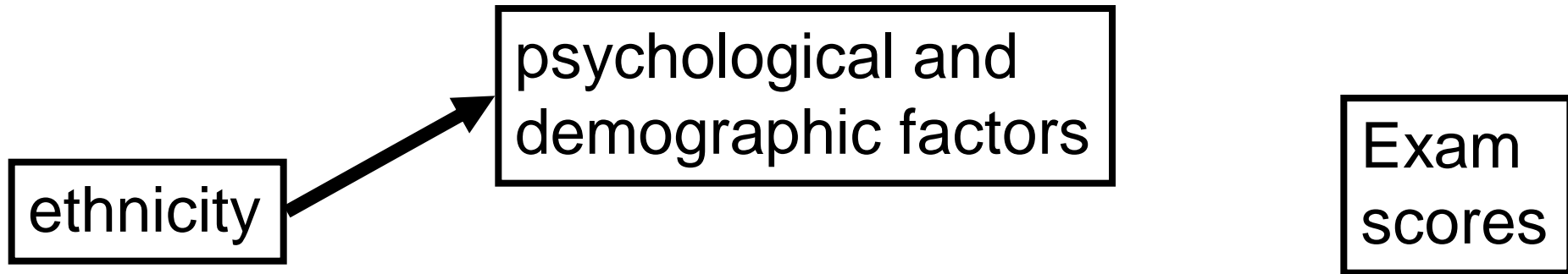
# Summary

psychological and  
demographic factors

ethnicity

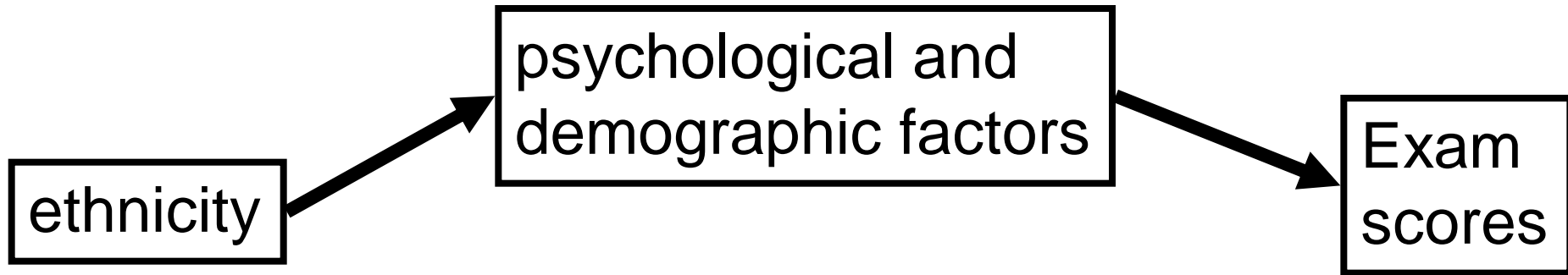
Exam  
scores

# Summary

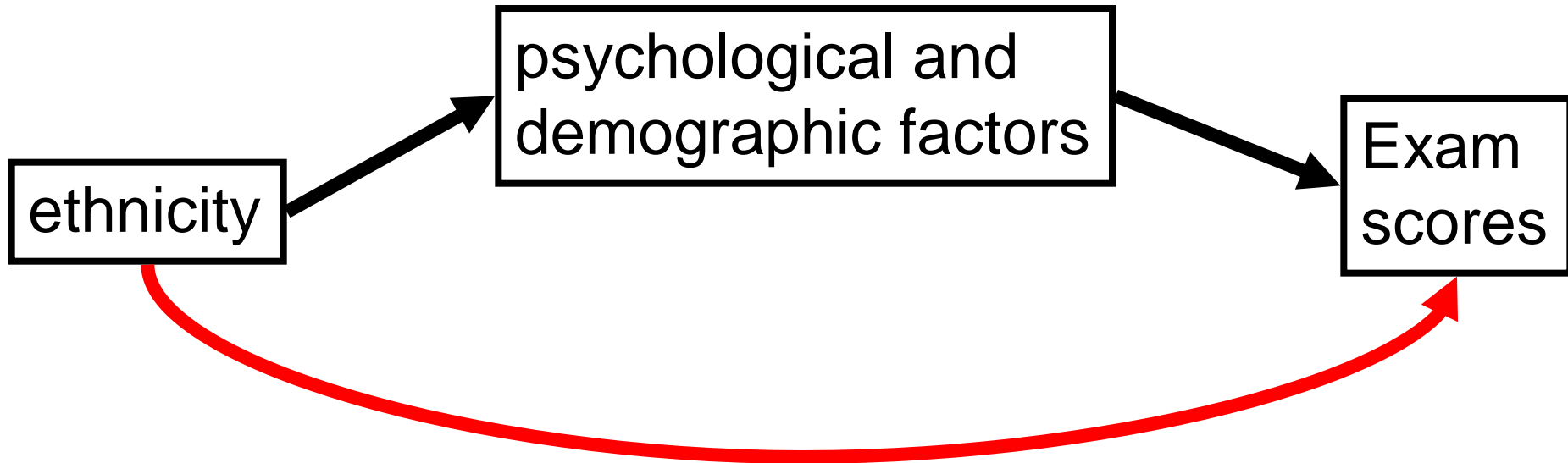




# Summary



# Summary



# Summary

